1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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423 society. This was not so among the Ngoni. We know little about the way in which rights in cultivated and grazing-lands, hunting-rights and rights to water were distributed in the old Ngoni State, but if the present position is any guide, it seems likely that there was no well-developed system of land-holding. After dwelling in
361 any one area for five years or so, the tribe moved on, partly because
[311] the fertility of the soil had been exhausted and partly for other reasons. Thus rights to land did not endure; land itself was expendable. What endured was merely the pattern of residential settlement, the arrangement of people in clusters and divisions and villages. Men and women lived where they belonged in the segmentary residential system, and relative geographical position did not determine, but was determined by, political affiliation.

557 Power in the State was thus power over people rather than
631 over natural resources. It is true that cattle were valuable, but
231 even they appear to have been eaten rather more often than in many tribes in which cattle are a form of wealth and investment rather
[262] than a regular item of diet. Furthermore, there was the doctrine
[422] that all cattle belonged to the Paramount Chief, so that village
[643] headmen with cattle in their byres held them, as it were, only by favour of the chief. The principal index of power was the number of a man's dependants. Political struggles were essentially not
[668] struggles to control wealth but to enjoy the support of followers.
[727] The main source of dependants was from raiding, and hence the allocation of captives was crucial to the working of the social system.

727 Fraser writes of the northern Nyasaland Ngoni, that warriors kept their own captives.[1] This does not seem to have been the usual procedure among the Fort Jameson group. Although some informants spoke as if they, or their forebears, had been actually
[643] taken by the person who became their lord, others said that in general all captives belonged to the Paramount Chief, and that he could allocate them as he wished; usually, however, he allocated them to the warriors who had captured them. It was a specific privilege of regional governors to keep their own captives. It seems probable that the Paramount Chief's allocations were made to the heads of segments to which the warriors belonged, for many of my informants were said to have been captured by a few people, some of whom are described by contemporary travellers as generals and war-leaders, and who are unlikely to have made many front-line captures themselves. Moreover, it seems that on small raids
[721] organized by the head of a major segment, not on a national scale,

[1] Fraser, *Primitive people*, p. 37.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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captives were retained within the segment. In later years, at least, small-scale raiding organized by segment heads went on without the Paramount Chief's knowledge and it seems unlikely under those conditions that captives would have been sent in to him.

There is confirmatory evidence from other Ngoni groups. Hodgson wrote of the Dowa group that a warrior who had captured three or more people had one returned to him by the chief,[3] from which we may infer that they were at the disposal of the chief. For the Southern Ngoni, who are not so closely related to the Fort Jameson group as are those in northern Nyasaland and Dowa District, Read wrote that the Paramount Chief had a monopoly of slaves taken in war and that he distributed these to successful warriors, his wives and his relatives.[3]

Cattle were handled in much the same way as captives. There was a dogma that all cattle belonged to the Paramount Chief, but they were dispersed among the different villages and kept in the byres there. The lord of a major segment had effective control of the cattle in his own village and, when he chose to exercise it, in the other villages of his segment as well. When the Paramount Chief visited a village, cattle were killed in his honour and he was praised as the giver of the feast, but in the chief's absence the head of the village decided when beasts were to be killed. A lord appointed his lieutenants to look after his cattle as well as his people. When cattle had been taken on a raid, they were driven back to Ngoniland and then allocated to a lord.

Cattle for bridewealth were provided for a man by his lord. However it seems possible that a large proportion of the marriages made by politically unimportant people were not ratified by the passage of cattle.[4]

Such evidence as there is suggests that the Ngoni consumed their cattle faster than many similar cattle people and, as with dependants, they captured cattle more than they reared them. People speak of the days before the conquest as a time when they lived entirely on meat and beer. Poole suggests that the Ngoni produced little or no food in their own country,[5] and while this is plainly contradicted by contemporary evidence, it is probable that they did rely on raiding to supplement their supplies of cattle and cereals, and that therefore many captured cattle were used as food. Thus cattle themselves were a short-term asset and the control of

[3] Hodgson, 'Dowa District', p. 153.
[3] Read, 'Standards of Living', p. 20.
[4] cf. Barnes, *Marriage*, pp. 7-8.
[5] Poole, 'Human geography of Lundazi and Petauke', p. 13.

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tiation of function between the senior lieutenants of the Paramount Chief, it is improbable that there were any special political offices outside the residential system.

Read mentions a political hierarchy with various titles.[15] At least in the Fort Jameson group, three of the four vernacular terms she gives were used in connexion with the residential system. The fourth, *amanxusa*, was used in Zulu for messengers sent by a chief and a dialectical variant of this (*manyusa*) is so used nowadays at Fort Jameson. They have no executive authority and do not seem to have had any in the past.

Fraser, writing of the Ngoni of northern Nyasaland, says that there were two groups of lieutenants, one composed of men who became Ngoni before the crossing of the Zambezi and which exercised civil power, and the other which included men of more recent incorporation into the Ngoni tribe and which supplied the war leaders. He implies that the war leaders did not take part in the civil administration.

There seems not to have been this distinction between civil and military lieutenants among the Fort Jameson group. Wiese's 'Minister of War', who was referred to as a Commander-in-Chief by other contemporary writers, was a segment head with the same responsibilities towards his people as anyone else. The regiments had leaders responsible for the tactical control of warriors, some of whom were recently incorporated men, and presumably Fraser is referring to them, but his statement that the man often chosen to lead the whole army had no voice in the council conflicts with Elmslie's account of the same place and period. The war leader, Ng'onomo, who is mentioned by Fraser, acted as regent on the death of the Paramount Chief in northern Nyasaland.[16]

The village as such had an importance independent of the size or order of segment of which it was headquarters or by which it was inhabited. There were no special terms for distinguishing the heads of large or small segments, for all were lords or ladies. But a special term[17] was used for a village headman, irrespective of the order of segment of which he was lord, provided he was not a lieutenant who had become head of the village in the absence of agnatic descendants of the founder. The use of a special term may have been an indication of the village headman's importance, part of which derived from the control he exercised over the cattle

[15] Read, 'Tradition', p. 462. cf. her account of the southern Ngoni in 'Standards', p. 16.

[16] Fraser, *Primitive people*, p. 32. cf. Elmslie, *Wild Ngoni*, pp. 121, 289.

[17] *Inkhosana*. In Zulu, a small or petty chief. cf. Read, 'Tradition', p. 462.

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kept at his village. Although his lords, and ultimately the Paramount Chief, had rights in the cattle, their day-to-day care was his responsibility and he had in practice the greatest say in their disposal, either for consumption, for payment of bridewealth, or for damages awarded against a member of his segment. He was head of the most clearly demarcated local group and was responsible for it to the heads of superior segments. The village was the cattle-herding unit, but for agricultural tasks it seems probable that in large villages the co-operative unit was the division. Agricultural work was directed, at least so far as women were concerned, by the lady of the division. I have no clear information on how domestic tasks such as cooking were organized within the village but it seems probable that individual women cooked for their husbands and for the children in their care.[18]

Fraser writes of the Ngoni of northern Nyasaland that a village headman had special ritual duties to perform when his village shifted to a new site, and Rattray reports a similar procedure for the southern Ngoni. Wiese mentions an oracular method of selecting a new village site among the Fort Jameson Ngoni, but is silent on whether or not the headman had a special role to play.[19] I could gain no information from my own informants about former practices, but nowadays the headman has no specific ritual to perform when a village shifts.

There is little evidence about the number of villages in the Ngoni State. There are a few conflicting observations on population and size and number of villages in the Fort Jameson group at the time of the conquest,[20] and we have estimates for the population of different groups in recent years, but estimates of the population and number of villages at earlier dates are all highly speculative.

The term for lieutenant, *nduna*, was used at all levels in the residential system and was applied even to men who had not yet founded their own segments. As already mentioned, a lieutenant was a quasi-related dependant, not a kinsman, of his lord who was selected to be in charge of a section of his lord's dependants and to carry out the instructions of his lord. Some of my informants referred to a ceremony at which a new office of lieutenant was created and a feather placed in the hair of the newly appointed man, but others appeared not to have heard of this custom. The

[18] Barnes, *Marriage*, pp. 15*f*. For the Ngoni of southern Nyasaland, see Read, 'Standards', p. 16.

[19] Fraser, *Primitive peoples*, pp. 203*ff*; Rattray, *Folk-lore stories*, pp. 36*ff*, 109*ff*, 196*ff*; Wiese, 'Geschichte', p. 199. In his 'Expedição', p. 480, Wiese associates this method only with a change of residence by the Paramount Chief.

[20] See pp. 103*f*.

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Apart from the fact that the head of the segment is, or once was, a member of the royal lineage, there is little difference between a cadet segment and a commoner one. The majority of segments in the system as a whole have been founded by commoners and the majority of extant villages are the headquarters of commoner segments. Before the conquest, one of the principal mechanisms for ensuring the spatial dispersal of an expanding population was the formation of new large villages, the headquarters of segments formed for bevies of queens. After the conquest a comparatively stationary population has dispersed not under the leadership of queens but by the formation of new segments by commoners, not all of them even lieutenants of their lords.

Some indication of the distribution of present-day villages among these various types is given in Table VII. This table is based on 82 village histories collected in the general course of fieldwork. The villages were selected casually and arbitrarily, without reference to this particular problem. I also collected the histories of several counties, in the course of which I became acquainted with other village histories. I have excluded these from the sample to avoid weighing it too heavily with capital and chief's villages, whose names are mentioned in county histories. In consequence, the sample contains no chief's village at all. It also contains too few villages that have come into Ngoniland from other tribal areas, as can be seen by comparing it with Table IV (p. 118). Nevertheless it should serve to show the rough orders of magnitude.

It will be seen that about four out of five at the present time are commoner villages, and that about half of these were already in existence as distinct villages in 1898. On the other hand, seven out of the nine royal villages in the sample were founded before 1898.

Apart from the six incoming villages and the two founded by a labour immigrant and Administrative action, all the villages in the sample have some segment of the old residential system, or its modern equivalent, as their core. Most of the commoner villages have been formed by the differentiation of a quasi-relative, cognatic or affinal relative from his lord. By contrast, most royal villages have been formed by differentiation between bevies of co-wives or between sons and their fathers.

In pre-conquest times there was a dogma that the chief owned all the cattle in the tribe. This dogma related to the structural position of the chief as head of the highest segment, and therefore in authority over the State and its resources rather than to the day-to-day care and disposal of cattle. There were cattle in each village

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and village headmen looked after them. About half the cattle in Ngoniland were captured during the fighting of 1898 and although many of these were returned to the Ngoni, they were soon disposed of to White traders. To-day, many of the cattle in royal (i.e. capital, regal and chief's) villages are said to belong to the Paramount Chief. This statement of royal ownership is now not merely one referring to political overlordship, for these beasts are contrasted with others which belong to commoners and to other chiefs

TABLE VII. VILLAGES FOUNDED BEFORE AND AFTER 1898

How founded or incorporated in the Ngoni State	*Type of present-day village*					
	Royal			*Cadet*	*Commoner*	*Total*
	Capital	*Regal*	*Chief's*			
Founded by regional governors or their ancestors prior to creation of the Ngoni State	0	0	0	0	3	3
Founded before 1898 to accommodate other segments of the residential system	1	6	0	1	25	33
Total known to have been founded before 1898	1	6	0	1	28	36
Founded to accommodate segments of the residential system, date unknown	0	0	0	1	11	12
Founded after 1898 to accommodate segments of the residential system or their modern equivalents	0	2	0	4	20	26
Founded outside the Ngoni State, date unknown, entering it after 1898	0	0	0	0	6	6
Founded in Ngoniland by a labour immigrant after 1898	0	0	0	0	1	1
Founded by direct Administrative action after 1898	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total known to have been founded or incorporated after 1898	0	2	0	4	28	34
Grand total	1	8	0	6	67	82
Sample collected casually in the general course of fieldwork.						

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and members of the royal lineage. Nevertheless, the care and disposal of these royal cattle is the responsibility of the head of each village where they are kept. If the Paramount Chief visits the village, and a beast is killed in his honour, it is the Paramount Chief who is praised as the owner of the beast. The nearer the village concerned to the Paramount Chief, geographically, in terms of segments, and in terms of counties, the more the man in charge of the cattle should refer to the Paramount Chief before killing one of them, or to report a loss by leopards or hyenas. A few years ago the son of the first lieutenant in a regal village in the Paramount Chief's county removed some royal cattle to another tribal area where he had kinsmen. When this was discovered the matter was discussed by the senior lieutenants of the Paramount Chief's county at his village, and the lieutenant and his son were ordered to be banished. A new man was made first lieutenant in the regal village. In this instance, the lieutenant showed plainly that he was not using the cattle in the interests of the chieftainship. Had his village been farther away from the Paramount Chief, or had his use of the cattle been less obviously merely to his own advantage, it is unlikely that such severe reprisals would have been taken.

These cattle do still provide a visible sign of the connexion between the headquarters of the various segments and the Paramount Chief, and they still provide the first lieutenants of the royal village with wealth which they can use at their discretion to further the interests of the chieftainship. The structural relationship between the Paramount Chief and his subordinates in the old segmentary system is still partly mediated through cattle.

In the old residential system each segment, however small, contained within itself the seeds of an independent State, for there was no inherent restriction on its growth. When the imposition of British rule modified this system, the effect of the ossification of the system at the top was to prevent further splits in the State. The relationship between the major segments which became counties was defined, or rather was redefined, in perpetuity within the bounds of a single Superior Native Authority. However, below the level of these segments no such process of definition took place. A county, in Administrative terms, consisted of so many villages, not of a system of nesting segments. The Administration did not perpetuate these lesser segments by adapting them to its own scheme, and inter-village and intra-county relations were largely left to find their own configuration. This has had three distinct results.

Firstly, present relations between pairs of villages are still formulated in traditional terms and in part still arise as a result of

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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her daughters had died, and the herd of cattle was either inherited by the senior daughter's eldest son or divided among the sons of different daughters. Cewa informants said that quarrels constantly arose over the ownership of cattle, and two modern developments—the spread of *ulangwa*[1] marriage and of a patrilineal form of *mbumba* with its repercussions on cattle acquisition and disposal—caused further tensions in Cewa society.

M [178]

N 233 571

The role which cattle played in Ngoni social life partly depended on the structure and inter-relationships of the Ngoni social groups. The house and the family within the larger village unit were so organized that group ownership and group disposal of cattle caused no permanent friction. There were arguments about the disposal of cattle, but they were temporary and relatively trivial. The strength of tradition in the concept of ownership, and in the values and attitudes inherent in cattle-owning and keeping, was firmly established and was related to modern needs by the ingenuity of the Ngoni in manipulating traditional practices to suit new situations. Cattle therefore strengthened the integration of existing social units, and helped to preserve that unity and cohesion in Ngoni society which the ancestors were said to commend and to wish for. On this plane of conformity to a required pattern, cattle influenced the living and their behaviour. They also, through the structure and function of the houses, belonged to the spirit who was guarded in a particular house. As we shall see in Chapter IV, the ritual formula of address to the ancestor at the sacrifice of a beast was always 'Here is your beast . . . Here is your meat.' The living and the dead were joined therefore in the common ownership of a herd or part of a herd. The actual practices in social and ritual life where cattle were concerned, and the ideas and concepts from which the practices arose, will take up most of this chapter and form the necessary prelude to the further analysis of the ancestor cult.

N 171 422 [233 651]

Ownership of cattle and care of herds

'The war of the cattle-tax' was the name given in the central kingdom to the installation of dipping tanks in the 1930's and the levying of a tax of a shilling per head of cattle on all cattle-owners. The attempt by the Government to focus responsibility for dipping and to collect the taxes due brought out clearly the difficulties of applying English conceptions of ownership to the Ngoni. In the English meaning of the word ownership, a man can claim as his possession cattle which he has bought or inherited, and their offspring. This individual ownership means that he alone has the right to sell the animals or their milk, to regard the profits from such sale as his, and at any time to kill an animal for meat. He can will them to his descendants or to anyone he chooses after his

[1] Marriages in which the man took his wife to live in his village, but did not give *lobola* for her.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

death, or he can give them to anyone he likes during his lifetime. Hence individual acquisition in the English sense involves the legal right of individual disposal; the individual possession of profits from such disposal; and the individual responsibility for complying with any regulations concerning cattle, such as inoculation, slaughter for foot-and-mouth disease, and testing of milk.

In Ngoni usage the concept of ownership involved the acquisition and disposal of, and the responsibility for, cattle, but behind this apparent similarity of terms lay a wide difference in interpretation. Cattle could be acquired by inheritance, by natural increase, by *lobola*, as payment in a court case, as a gift, or by purchase. Formerly cattle could be acquired in warfare and raiding, but never by purchase. With this exception of buying cattle for cash, the methods of acquiring cattle had not altered since the Ngoni settled in Nyasaland. In pre-European days in the Ngoni kingdoms only the Paramount, the subordinate chiefs, the *akumusana* and the big *izinduna* possessed cattle. Having a herd marked the owner as a leading member of a leading clan, or as a famous warrior of a lesser clan whose distinguished war service had been rewarded by the Paramount giving him cattle, or allowing him to keep some of those he had taken from the enemy. New herds were formed when a Paramount or a chief moved out of his father's village and set up his own *lunungulu* village, taking with him one or more of his mothers who, together with his big wife, set up houses in the new village, and these houses were allotted cattle from the former undivided herd. Another way in which a herd was divided was when a big *induna* in charge of the house of a leading wife of a Paramount or a chief built a kraal for the cattle of that house near his own huts, and added to that herd any cattle which he acquired. Large Ngoni villages in pre-European days usually had one or more kraals on the edge of the village, as well as the big central one. When the large villages broke up and the *induna* moved off to found his own village, he still took care of the cattle of that house. If the house was one where an ancestral spirit was guarded, a successor was always appointed to live in the hut and guard the spirit. Hence the relationship of the house, its spirit guardian, its cattle and the *induna* in charge continued, though the personalities changed through death and for other reasons. This explained how in the 1930's cattle were found in one kraal which were said to belong to a house or a woman guardian of a spirit miles away in another village. Sometimes they were described as the cattle of a man long dead.

It is clear, therefore, that the Ngoni methods of acquiring cattle and building up herds did not result in a concept of individual ownership. Cattle were not willed from father to son, but the son of a Paramount or a chief, when he made his new *lunungulu* village, had the right to receive and to take with him the cattle of his mother's house; and the head of the *gqo* village who stayed behind also received and looked after the

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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cattle of *his* mother's house and those of other widows of his father, even though the widows remarried and went to live elsewhere. The ownership of a herd, in the sense of authority to acquire and to dispose of the cattle, was in fact vested in the senior male members belonging to each house in whose name cattle were held. This senior male leadership of a house had, in the central kingdom, a parallel in the senior male members of a *banja*. The implication in both was the same—that there was a group of senior men linked by membership of a house or a *banja*, who took responsibility for all the cattle in the herd of that house or *banja* and for all additions to the herd. Any new beasts acquired through natural increase, *lobola*, court payments, gifts, or purchase, by any member of that house went into the herd belonging to it. Thus it was easy for young men working in the south to send back money to their fathers or fathers' brothers to buy cattle. They knew the choice would be well made and that the cattle would be well cared for until their return.

The right of disposal of cattle in a herd belonging to a house or *banja* was based on the same concept of ownership. The senior male group had to decide which beasts to send for the *lobola* when a young man of their house married. They undertook, as owners of the cattle, to pay fines in court cases when a member of the house was fined. If money was needed, either by the group as a whole or by an individual member, a beast was chosen and sold by the senior men; part of the proceeds was given to the individual who needed help, and part either buried under the floor of the hut of the woman who was head of the house, or converted into cloth and stored in the hut. Gifts of cattle were sometimes given to important visitors, or as an expression of sympathy when mourning at a funeral, or for a sacrifice to the ancestors. On all such occasions the decision to dispose of one or more beasts and the selection of them were in the hands of the senior male group. Though prolonged discussion might go on before a decision to sell or make a gift was made, once there was agreement the selection was often made very quickly. The leading men would go to the kraal, point out the beasts to the herd-boys, and tell them to drive them to the appointed place.

The care of the herds was primarily the responsibility of the senior men, though the actual herding was delegated to the herd-boys. Informants said that in pre-European days great care was taken of the animals in the rainy season; the ant-hills in the kraal were preserved so that the animals might get out of the mud, and calf-houses with roofs were always provided for shelter for the calves. I saw some calf-houses of this kind, and some kraals with ant-hills left in them, but neither was common practice, and the reason given was that the kraals and herds were much smaller than in pre-European days.

There were two chief objectives in the care of herds: that the cattle should keep well and avoid disease, and that they should multiply. The

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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away the prize animals in the herd. Their formula in presenting a beast was 'Here is a small sheep.' This belittling of a gift was the social counterpart of their inner desire for a reputation for generosity.

It has been clear from many previous references that mutual assistance among members of a house was inherent in the social pattern of cattle-ownership. The Ngoni attached great value to this reciprocity of service, and it was deeply embedded in their social ethic. Young men in Ngoni villages thought twice before they deliberately took action which would bring them into the courts, because the fine would have to be paid by their elders from the common herd of cattle. The implications of this service proved no ultimate deterrent to hot-headed youth, but the lesson was constantly being rubbed in. After a court case for adultery, when a young man's father and his father's brothers had handed over a beast for a fine, they would grumble in the evening by the kraal at this waste of good cattle, and suggest it was time the young man went off to the south and sent money home to buy more cattle. This was the cycle of mutual help—the elders provided cattle from the herd for *lobola* and fines for the young men, who in turn went off to work and sent back money to buy more cattle. Reference has been made to 'the cloth of the spirits', when cattle were sold to provide cash for a young man who needed it, and the balance was used to buy cloth which was kept in the hut where the ancestral spirit was guarded. This cloth was the common property of all who belonged to the house owning the herd, and was returnable to the hut after it had been worn for some festive occasion. The forms which this mutual help could take were numerous and varied, and they all illustrated the fact that the correct and continuous observance of this reciprocity was considered by the Ngoni as one of the basic values underlying the ownership and use of cattle.

Among the group bound together by cattle-ownership this emphasis on mutual help as a desirable behaviour pattern had its counterpart in the social concept of integration. As we have seen, the Ngoni put a high value on 'staying together', on being united when challenged by a situation which made for disintegration. Within the social units of the house and family, the ownership of cattle and their care and use demanded some degree of co-operation through responsibility for the herd which was held in common. Integration between the living and their ancestors was also provided by the cattle. Common possession of a herd did more than just hold people together. The pattern of family and house organization which was characteristically Ngoni was given some stability through the ownership of cattle, allowing for the subdivision of herds when the new village 'went out', the exchanges at marriage, and the sacrifices at death.

because it was implied that her family had not given her good instruction and advice before marriage. 843 152

The birth of the child

When the senior women were satisfied that labour was about to begin, they took charge of all the preparations. They first sent out of the hut all the things belonging to the husband, his clothes, axes, spears, shields, and all the good mats, pots and baskets. Only old mats and clothes and pots were used during labour, and the hut was henceforth unclean and forbidden to the husband and to all males. The mother-in-law directed operations, with the help of her co-wives, the wives of her husband's brothers, widowed sisters of her husband, and some of the wives of the younger generation. The women who took an active part in the actual delivery were the older ones, but several younger women came to assist, or look on, and to encourage the young wife. 844 [422] [846]

She was made to sit on a mat leaning back against the knees of another woman, and the experienced 'midwives' were in front to receive the child in their hands. She was told to bear down and sometimes given a bark rope tied to the rafters to pull on. Though she might be in great pain, she was not expected to cry out or even to groan. The older women talked to her encouragingly, and wiped her face, or gave her a little water to drink. After the birth, the woman knelt forward leaning on her hands until the placenta was born. It was buried in a hole, in the floor at the back of the hut on the women's side.

The baby was washed by a senior woman and oiled with castor oil. The cord was tied with thread and the baby was given very thin gruel made of finger millet fried and ground. This was intended to act as a purgative to get rid of the mucus in the stomach. After this had been ejected, a tiny bit of the sour milk curds was put in the baby's mouth. [853]

The mother was washed and covered with a cloth and left to rest, while the women folded up the delivery mat

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
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societies maintaining officially a conspiracy of silence, the stories were only standard replies by adults to children, and most adults admitted that children pursued these inquiries among themselves and found out what they wanted to know from each other.

Naming the child

After coming out of the hut and being presented to its male kin and to the elders of the village as 'the new stranger', the baby was given a name. The choice of a name was usually left to the baby's paternal grandfather. He sometimes gave it his name or his father's name, if a boy, or if a girl, his mother's name or his father's sister's name. There was no ceremony attached to naming. After the matter had been talked over by the men at the kraal gate, the grandfather came to the hut, and called the mother and child out and said, 'His name is so and so.' The personal name was seldom used in ordinary social intercourse, but in spite of this every child was given a personal name, and sometimes had added to it a descriptive name indicating that it had been born face downwards, or born a twin, or born too soon after the previous baby.

At this time of naming, the father, or more generally the paternal grandfather, prepared a 'carrying skin' for the mother to carry the baby in. It really belonged to the baby rather than to the mother, for it was used by the nurse girl to carry the baby, and she had the child in her charge most of the day. The skin was that of a goat or small calf from the herd owned by the house to which the baby's father belonged. The skin was cleaned and scraped and made soft by rubbing in fat, and handed over to the mother with some of the meat for broth, and the rest of the meat was eaten by the males of that house. The gift in time became a cloth and not a skin, as skins for wearing or household use went out of fashion. The cloth when presented however was still called a 'carrying skin' and a goat or a calf from the herd of the

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
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round to protect the cow and calf, until they were strong enough to go back to the kraal.

The intricate system of ownership of cattle, including the relation between a house and a herd, and between certain herds and the spirits of former great people, was part of a herd-boy's background knowledge. He listened at the kraal gate to the men discussing questions of ownership. When a decision was taken to kill a beast, or sell one, or to transfer one or more at a marriage, or to hand over a beast in payment of a fine, the senior boys knew which group of beasts in the kraal must be driven out to be looked over in order that a selection could be made by the man concerned.

The Ngoni classified their cattle according to age, sex, colouring, size and shape of horns, whether castrated or not, whether in calf or not. Knowledge of the extensive series of names used for these 'classes' of cattle was part of a herd-boy's A.B.C. By the time he was old enough to be told to drive certain cattle out of the kraal, designated by their class, he knew exactly which ones were meant. He could also use the cattle terminology to be precise in telling an owner about a beast which had strayed or one that had a sore hoof, or one that was giving an exceptionally good or poor flow of milk.

Herd-boys learned that cattle constituted a form of wealth, not only by the numbers a man possessed and could display, but also because they were easily realizable assets. Cattle could be sold to pay taxes, debts and court fines; and to pay men working for an Ngoni owner of cotton or tobacco gardens. They learned also that since cattle could be converted into money, the men of the house owning the cattle could use the money to buy cloth. This cloth, the property of the house, was kept and looked after by the senior women, who would lend it out temporarily to young men wishing to dress up smartly to go courting or go on a visit.

In the modern forms of Nyasaland economy it was a

593 payment. It may have been that Nimshi was merely trying to get
583 as much as he could hope for out of Simon, who was a fierce and powerful person. In view, however, of the decline in the incidence of bridewealth and the increasing importance of the legalization payment it is not unlikely that this right to the daughter's legalization payment may soon be separated from bridewealth.

428 It is at the death of a man that his children exercise their particular
[583] rights from him as against the claims of other kin. If a man has paid bridewealth for his wife, then the claim of his eldest son by her to his property is clear. The eldest son by the great wife is the heir, and he takes over control of the dead man's herd, and inherits his money. For inheritance, cattle are more important than money.
[454] Most men keep their money hidden in the ground, and it sometimes happens that a man dies without mentioning where he has put his savings, so that they are lost. Cattle are publicly-owned property,
[422] in that every boy in the village knows the ownership of each beast, and they can be seen in the byre every day. Men sometimes divide their property among their sons before they die, but it is more usual for a man to give one cow to the eldest son of each wife and to leave the rest undivided. The residue then passes to his heir on his death.
[583] If bridewealth has not been paid, the claim of the dead man's eldest son to the herd may be disputed by the dead man's brothers. Succession here does not seem to be determined in the light of the failure to pay bridewealth but by a consideration of residence. If a man is living in the same village as his father then he can expect to inherit his father's cattle when he dies. If he is living elsewhere, and tries to claim his inheritance, he may be opposed by his father's kinsmen resident in his father's village should he try to remove the cattle.

The eldest son inherits, but he has an obligation to help his sisters and younger brothers when they need beasts or money. If the other brothers are scattered in different villages, the herd may be divided among them, but it may be many years after the death that the division takes place. If the eldest son is in Southern Rhodesia the dead man's brothers delay the division of the herd as long as possible in case the rightful heir should return.

[425] Women acquire cattle and other animals with money they have saved or gained by selling beer, or as gifts from their husbands.
[583] If no bridewealth has been paid for a woman any animals she may own pass on her death to her eldest son. If bridewealth has been paid for her the disposal of her property is uncertain. Some people argue that the animals cannot then go to her son, for her son belongs to her husband's group because of the bridewealth, and that they ought to pass to her brother's son. Others say that the animals should go to her eldest son irrespective of bridewealth. Unfortunately I did not record any specific instance of inheritance from a woman.

7: Hodgson G-5 (1926) 1933 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Maravi FR4

M 575 335 [534] so that anyone coming that way may see "medicine" and turn aside. After which, all bathe in the stream, and the ceremonies are over.

During a *vingwe* dance six drums are always used, namely, the *mphonje* (five or six feet in length, and beaten at one end only); the *ndewere* (another large drum three feet in length), or the *mbalule*; the *mbendambanda* and the *mtiwiso* (of medium size about two feet long); and two *kambumbu* (small drums eighteen inches in length). These are beaten by men detailed by the headman or *chiwinda*; but there are no special drums appertaining exclusively to particular *mikhwala* or songs. The big village drum always belongs to the headman; the others are privately owned, and are hired out for a small fee, such as an *nsengwa* basket. Before use they are always warmed first at the fire.

4. *Property.*

M N 423 [425] Land was acquired by the Achewa by occupation and by the Angoni by conquest. It was divided by the paramount chief among his lieutenants, who in turn divided their sections among the heads of lesser groups or families. Each headman now allots land to his villagers; and if they move the village to a new site, everyone retains possession of the garden which he held before. The allottee is entitled to trees, antheaps, honey or anything else on his plot; and he may sell crops or other produce, but may not sell or lease the land itself. When reaping his crop, he presents a basket of maize to his headman.

M N [422] In the home, the wife must provide the pots, and they are her personal property. The husband must supply her with baskets, hoes, etc.; but everything which pertains to woman's work belongs to the wife. The produce of a garden is the equal property of both. After a boy has passed through his initiation, he is given a small garden of his own. When, as in the case of the Achewa, he leaves the village to marry, the garden reverts to the chief, who is always spoken of as the owner of the land, since it is he who divides it out among his people.

N [622]

N 422 233 The majority of the cattle owners are Angoni. Possession is individual; but all the animals in one village are kept in one open kraal belonging to the village headman, who selects small boys to look after them. Herdsmen were formerly unpaid; but now, when a beast is sold, killed or otherwise removed, they receive a present from the owner, as also does the headman. There is no fixed fee; but the owner of a dozen head may give the headman a calf every other year, while the owner of one or two only gives him a goat. If a man living in a village where there is no kraal buys cattle, he frequently places them in the care of a friend at a neighbouring village where there is a kraal, instead of handing them over to his own headman. The friend makes his own arrangement with the headman; but the friend is liable to the owner, and the usual payment is made to the friend, who divides it with the headman.

N 672 233 If a beast dies in the kraal, there is no liability, provided that the headman (or responsible friend) informs the owner, so that the latter can make use of the meat. Should the headman or friend fail to do this, he must pay the owner a live animal of the same age and sex. Where loss occurs through the carelessness of a herdsman, a case for damages lies against him. Sometimes cows calve in the kraal, but generally they wander off into the bush for the purpose; if they are then lost, or killed by carnivora, there is no liability. If a cow sold as sound dies

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

621
622

TABLE 1. *Village Types*

Type of village		*Senior resident*
Royal	Capital	First lieutenant
	Regal	First lieutenant
	Chief's	Chief
Cadet		Royal Headmen
Commoner		Commoner Headmen

This process of village formation may be illustrated from Mpezeni's own county. The capital of the county is the village founded by Mpezeni I for his chief wife and one or two other wives. His heir Singu was born in this village, and when he married he founded two villages of his own which are now regal villages. In the senior of these two Mpezeni II was born, and in about 1925 he founded a new village which is still the chief's village of the county. There are other regal villages in the county founded in a similar manner. 621

This formation of royal villages would, other things being equal, lead to a dispersal of the population. It seems, however, that the major factor in dispersing the population since 1898 has been the formation of independent commoner villages. Many of these villages have histories that go back to the foundation of the village as an independent unit immediately after 1898, and it seems likely that the unsettled conditions of those days and the burning of villages did much to bring about the breakdown of the old system in which the royal villages were more important than they are today. 161 621

The royal villages are more closely connected with the chieftainships than are the commoner villages, and the chiefs visit in them more frequently than in other villages. A dispute in a royal village is usually settled by a meeting in the village itself attended by the local chief, whereas in the case of an ordinary village dispute the matter would be taken to the chief for him to settle in his own village or court. A chief may be called to a royal village to drink beer. The royal herds of cattle are kept in the royal villages, and the chiefs look to the first lieutenants of their royal villages for the well-being of the royal cattle as well as of the inhabitants of the royal villages. All the cattle in the country are held to belong in one sense to the Paramount Chief himself,[1] but in as far as the cattle held by most people are concerned, there is no more to this statement than in the parallel expression that 628 [627] 422 231 643

[1] Cf. Coxhead, p. 27.

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

422 Mpezeni is the owner of the land, or of the world. The cattle kept in
231 the royal villages are held to have belonged formerly to Mpezeni I or
643 to Zwangendaba, and therefore still belong to the Paramount Chief. Chiefs and other members of the royal lineage who have cattle inherited in this way, in fact dispose of them as they please when the Paramount Chief is not in their village, but if he appears and a beast is killed in his honour, it is the Paramount who is praised as the owner of the beast and not the local owner. In the capital and chief's villages the lieutenants are more under the control of the chief of the county, who may intervene to depose a lieutenant if he thinks that his cattle are not being well looked after.

622 The Administration does not distinguish between one type of vil-
621 lage and another, and gives the same title of headman[1] to the man in
648 charge of the village, whoever he may be. It tends to act on the assumption that all headmen are of equal status and have the same amount of authority in their villages. Combined with the decline in the power of the royal lineage, this policy may lead to the assimilation of the different types of village to a common form.

II. THE VILLAGE

Material Setting

361 Ngoni villages, which form the principal units of administration in the country, contain from half a dozen to 120 huts. It is seldom more than a quarter of a mile from one edge of a village to the other. There is a rough arrangement of huts into parallel lines, with the doors all facing the same way at right-angles to the direction of the
[343] lines. Kitchen huts, which are similar in appearance to dwelling huts, are included in these lines, while in front of a line of dwellings may be a line of storehouses and sties for small stock. On the edge of the
[417] village are the cattle byres. There are seldom any fences marking off courtyards within the village, so that it is possible to sit on the veranda of a hut and look along at all the other verandas. If there are well-established divisions within the village, the boundaries of the divisions may be indicated by lines of aloes.

592 Most people, except polygynists and some children, may be said to live in one hut, in which they keep most of their belongings and where they usually sleep. A single hut may be occupied by up to about ten

[1] Usually *bedinan*, pl. *mabedimani*; otherwise *mfumu yamunzi*, pl. *mafumu wominzi*. The specific term for headman of a cadet or commoner village is *mwinimunzi*.

4: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1909)1910 FT7 Yao FT7
Marayi FR4
Ngoni FR5

M Y 241 only implement used. Sowing is done after the first rains, about November; the harvest takes place in May to July. Gardens are at varying distances from the villages, depending partly on the soil becoming exhausted after years of cultivation. Boundaries are marked by leaving M Y [423] a line of uncultivated ground, sowing a line of a different crop, tying knots in the young crops at intervals, ditches, etc. In N [422] starting a new garden, woodland is often taken; the trees

FIG. 8.

are cut down, leaving stumps 3 feet high; the undergrowth is cleared away and burnt, the ashes distributed over the land, which is then hoed, really very superficially; the earth is then made up into little heaps with a central hole in each, after the first rains four or five grains of the cereal (maize, millet) are dropped in each and covered with earth; as the young shoots grow the hole is more and more filled in.

With the cereal is planted the seed of peas, beans, pumpkins, the former on coming up then grow up the maize stalks. The seed is last year's product and not specially selected.

M Y [343] [417] Depredations among crops made by elephant, hippopotamus, large antelope (eland and kudu), pigs and baboons, vary in extent in different districts. Little grass huts are built, raised above the ground like a pile-dwelling, in which watchers are stationed. Fences, sometimes extending for miles, are built. The gardens of the chief are hoed by his slaves or the people of the village. Maize is collected M Y [251] in the cob, and after the outer coverings have been removed is stored; so is the *nkokwe*, millet in the head; beans and peas are stored in baskets. Medicine is put on the ground to ensure a good crop, and a piece of stick is sometimes hung up for good luck.

CATTLE, ETC.

N 231 [422] The keeping of cattle is practically restricted to certain tribes living in districts free from tsetse-fly (Angoni, Wankonde); among these people wealth is reckoned by cattle. The milk is little used; the flesh is eaten only when an animal dies. Marks of ownership are made by cutting the ears (Fig. 8). Cattle are kept in open kraals by Angoni, in a compartment of their houses by Wankonde; they are tended by the small boys as a rule. Goats and sheep are kept all over the country. Castration of cattle is a recognised practice (*kufula*).

N 281 Angoni make their shields from cattle skins; their spear handles are covered with goat hair (beard); hair anklets and armlets in dancing costume are made from goat hair. Skins are used as dress to a small extent.

HUNTING.

M 224 A man intimates to the community around that he is making a hunt by clothing a boy of about ten years in leaves, who precedes him and the men from his own village through adjacent villages; at each village the lad has to lie down and